

# **School Committee Meeting Minutes**

*Town Offices*

*April 12, 2004*

Present: Donald Parker, Chairperson  
Paul Wilson  
Gary Bourassa  
Hugh Muffoletto  
Bob Prescott

Also Present: Dr. Thomas Scott, Superintendent  
Suzanne Mahoney, Elementary Principal  
Lonnie Ouellette, Early Learning Director  
Sylvia Jordan, Middle School Principal  
Mike Smith, FinCom  
Mike Roy, Athletic Director

The meeting was called to order at 6:12 p.m.

Mr. Parker announced that following this meeting the committee will meet with the Board of Selectmen. Anything that was unable to be completed tonight will be addressed at the next meeting on April 27.

## **Public Participation:**

Mr. Bourassa expressed concern over a notice received in his child's backpack concerning Devens School. He stated that his child was upset and confused as to where she will attend school next year. Mr. Parker and Mr. Muffoletto repeated to those in attendance that the school committee has never mentioned canceling programs. The committee will do all that they can to keep the programs running, regardless of where they might be located next year.

## **Business Affairs:**

Dr. Scott reviewed payroll warrants 839 and 339. Payables warrant 444 was also reviewed.

## **New Business:**

Lonnie Ouellette spoke to the committee about the Community Partnership Audit. Auditors indicated that Shirley has an exceptional preschool and kindergarten program and that the town of Shirley will be receiving a commendation. Mrs. Ouellette was told at the exit interview that with a significantly small amount of money, possibly the lowest in the state, quality services and education are provided to a significantly large

population. This information will be included in a report that will be sent to Dr. Scott and to the school committee.

#### **FY05 Budget Review:**

It was previously mentioned that the school committee present to the town a budget that separates out the Shirley schools, SPED tuitions and high school tuitions. This would allow the townspeople to see the various costs of these programs. If the SPED and high school tuitions are moved to line items, it was questioned who would be responsible for control of the \$1.26 million associated with it. Programmatic responsibility remains with the Shirley School District.

The committee decided to hold any motions regarding separate line items until after they spoke with the Board of Selectmen later tonight.

Dr. Scott presented his recommendations for reducing the deficit:

- Section 2210 – Reduction in secretarial days worked to 231 days per year
- Section 2250 – Cut additional technology aide (proposed position for FY05)
- Section 2305 – Cut Ed. Tech position to 3 days (from 5)
- Section 2330 – Reduce recess aides to 9 hours per week
- Section 2330 – Reduce TA's by 2
- Section 4110 – Cut half time custodian (proposed position FY05)
- Section 4300 – Allot \$10,000 in extraordinary maintenance (from \$30,000 recommended by school committee on April 6, 2004) – emergency situations only

The above recommendations result in a total budget reduction of \$108,000.

The committee reviewed transportation fees. Dr. Scott has recommended charging all children in the district in grades k-12 a fee of \$180/child with a family cap of \$300.00. Children who are eligible for free or reduced school meals will not be charged these fees. Preschool children will be charged bus fees based on the number of days they attend school. Devens students will not be charged these fees as they already pay for one bus. These bus fees could bring in an estimated \$69,000 in revenue to a budget that is currently over by \$100,000. This overage is due to SPED costs. The district will be going out to bid soon for transportation services; this could change the budget slightly. Dr. Scott suggested that the committee vote on the "concept" of transportation fees. Once the concept of the fees is accepted he will present the committee with a policy. Mr. Wilson motioned to accept the concept of transportation fees of \$180/child, \$300 family maximum. Mr. Muffoletto seconded the motion. Motion was approved.

Mike Roy, Athletic Director, presented information to the committee regarding the implementation of athletic fees. Mr. Roy stated that there are currently 66 children in the school athletics program, approximately 19% of the student population. The current cost per child to run this program is \$182 or \$12,750. Mr. Roy indicated that he is looking for guidance from the committee as to whether to charge the athletic user fees. By charging

\$182 per student this would make the program self funded, based on the current costs. Dr. Scott stated that he has been approached by the Parker School to rent out gym space. With rental fees of \$25 per hour and money from the Booster club, there might not be a need to charge these fees. He recommended that a vote on this topic should be held until the rental revenue can be calculated. The committee agreed to table the athletic user fees until the next meeting.

Prior to adjourning the meeting Dr. Scott asked that the committee considers the home education plan for Patrick Grace. Mr. Wilson motioned to accept the plan. Mr. Bourassa seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

Mr. Parker stated that the next meeting, scheduled for April 27, will be the last meeting to discuss the budget. He asked that the meeting start earlier than currently scheduled. It was agreed that the meeting will be held at 6p.m. at Shirley Middle School.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:45 p.m. so that the members could meet with the Board of Selectmen. Once that meeting was concluded the school committee would not reconvene.

Respectfully submitted by:  
Karen Gutheil